

Caucus advocates for deaf employees

Deaf employees at Gallaudet who have concerns about issues in the workplace have a group of advocates to explore possible solutions.

The Deaf Employees' Caucus (DEC) of Gallaudet University, which was formed in February, has been busy identifying issues that affect deaf faculty and staff at Kendall Green. Over the summer, three task forces—employment and training, a “deaf friendly” environment at Gallaudet, and sign communication—were formed to investigate and discuss prominent issues and make recommendations.

The DEC will consider the task force recommendations this fall, according to Bridgetta Bourne-Firl, conference coordinator in the College for Continuing Education and DEC chair. “Then we will decide our priorities and push for our goals,” she said.

The task force on employment and training, chaired by Carolyn McCaskill-Emerson, coordinator of Minority and Multicultural Programs in Curriculum and Evaluation at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School, collected statistics on the numbers of deaf employees at Gallaudet. Its data reveal that 31 percent of regular status employees are deaf or hard of hearing. Bourne-Firl said there is concern that the number of deaf administrators has declined in the last five years. In July 1990, 28 of 79 administrators were deaf; in July of this year, 25 of 79 administrators were deaf.

The “deaf-friendly” environment task force, chaired by Monica Shimmin-Roehrig, Human Resources Information System technician in the Personnel Office, tackled issues such as signing skills among faculty and the availability of TTYs at public

phone booths on campus.

The task force on language/communication, chaired by Anne Marie Baer, research technician at the Electronic Networking for Interaction laboratory, is contemplating ideas for encouraging increased use of sign language on campus. “Many deaf people complain that not all hearing people sign in their presence,” Bourne-Firl said.

Members of the DEC will have a chance to hear the task forces' findings and add their feedback at an open meeting on September 26. All deaf and hard of hearing employees at Gallaudet are considered at-large members of the caucus, and hearing employees are considered supporting members, according to the DEC operating guidelines.

Only deaf or hard of hearing staff and faculty can be elected as council members or task force officers, said Bourne-Firl. Hearing people, however, may attend open meetings and be task force members. “Everyone is welcome—faculty or staff, hearing or deaf,” she said, adding that hearing people can benefit from attending DEC open meetings because they will learn about the issues that deaf employees face.

Advocate groups for deaf employees are not new at Gallaudet. The Deaf Employees' Caucus began as the Deafness Related Concerns Council during Dr. Edward C. Merrill, Jr.'s presidency to address the concerns of deaf and hard of hearing employees at Gallaudet. It later became the President's Council on Deafness. The President's Council on Deafness stopped meeting in 1992 but was revived as the DEC at the February 22, 1995, meeting.



DEC members are, left to right: (front) Bridgetta Bourne-Firl, chair; Thelma Schroeder, staff representative; Dr. Gina Oliva, representative at large; (back) Jennifer McMillan, MSSD representative; Dennis Berrigan, KDES representative; E. Lynn Jacobowitz, secretary; Dr. Allen Sussman, faculty representative; and Sharon Davis, representative. (Not pictured are representatives Sue Mather and Dr. Lois Bragg.)



The Fighting Elephants will battle the Dunkin' Donkeys in the Field House gym October 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the seventh Gallaudet Congressional Basketball Classic. Pictured at a September 19 tip-off breakfast are (from left): Abe Pollin, chair of the board of the Centre Group, which owns the Washington Bullets and Capitals (Bullets vice president and former NBA star Wes Unseld will coach the Elephants); Rep. David Bonior (D-Mich.), a Donkeys team captain; Gallaudet President I. King Jordan; and Rep. Mike Ward (D-Ky.), a Donkeys team member. Tickets, which are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students (MSSD and Gallaudet students free with I.D.), are available at the Public Relations Office, EMG, Room 101.

Undergraduate Studies gives renewed support

New students, returning former preps, and freshmen with conditions are finding renewed support both in and out of the classroom through the new School of Undergraduate Studies (SUS).

“We’re a mixed academic and service unit,” said Dr. Steve Weiner, dean of the school, which has its offices in Hall Memorial Building. One way SUS supports students is through the new course First Year Seminar, “which teaches better understanding of what I call ‘The Gallaudet Way,’” said Weiner. “It teaches students where Gallaudet services can help them. We do not always show them; we involve them in the learning.”

The school is home to the English Language Institute, the First Year Studies Program, and the Honors Program. It also includes coordinators for student assessment and faculty development. “All of our programs are being coordinated to promote excellence in learning and teaching,” Weiner said.

The new school, which is part of the Vision Implementation Plan, has 21 sections and 270 new students enrolled in its First Year Seminar this fall. This is about a 90 percent participation rate, even though it’s not a required course, said Weiner. In addition, about 23 upperclass students are serving as assistants in the First Year Seminar. Last year, Gallaudet tried out two freshman seminar classes, but this year marks its first effort to reach all new students.

The First Year Seminar is part of the First Year Studies Program, led by Dr. Catherine Andersen, coordinator of freshman studies, and Maria Waters, assistant coordinator. In addition to

the First Year Seminar, the program will be working with departments to ensure that they have common academic goals for first year students. This would include reinforcement of study, thinking, reading, and writing skills. In this first year, the coordinators are working most closely with the English Department and Library, but plans are being made to reach out to other departments.

“The First Year Seminar is one way for our University to embrace diversity and to respect difference among our students,” said Weiner. In addition to students who are ethnically and culturally diverse, Weiner plans to focus on other student groups that may need additional support to succeed. Two in particular, he said, are students of nontraditional ages, such as older students and students who are the first member of their families to attend college.

Weiner added that Dr. Richard Meisegeier, director of the Honors Program, is assembling an honors core team of several faculty members from different departments that will review and recommend revisions to the Honors program.

The School of Undergraduate Studies will be assisting the Council on Undergraduate Education in its efforts to enhance the general education program at Gallaudet and to develop standards for learning outcomes for all undergraduate majors. In the future, SUS hopes to offer small grants to departments who want to develop cross-discipline courses.

The school also will encourage and
continued on page 2

SUS combines academics, service

continued from page 1

support assessment of student achievement, in part by developing student databases. Other components include introducing student-centered learning methods and technologies to teachers and developing special programs for first year students.

The School of Undergraduate Studies will help departments outline what skills they expect students to get out of their courses. In particular, Dr. Ken Epstein, assessment coordinator for SUS, will be working to design methods to determine whether or not students can perform the outcomes specified in the course or program objectives. These assessments will go beyond traditional multiple choice or essay tests to include writing and thinking skills through activities such as simulations, role playing, and

other activities that permit students to demonstrate their skills in an applied setting.

The school also will help faculty in their efforts in educating a diverse body of students. Dr. Charles Giansanti, SUS coordinator for faculty development, will be working with Committee F (Faculty Development) to provide faculty with the workshops, training, and idea-sharing they need to improve their teaching. One such workshop already scheduled for this fall is on developing students' critical thinking skills and having students use their writing skills in courses other than English.

At the crux of the new School of Undergraduate Studies, said Weiner, is the desire "to improve our understanding of the student population we're working with. That, in turn, will help with long-term retention efforts."

Deaf Culture Festival draws crowds

The Washington Harbor Park was filled September 16 with an estimated 5,000 members of the local deaf community and its supporters.

The Deaf Culture Festival, hosted by the Metropolitan Washington Deaf Community's Roundtable on Deaf Issues, was the first celebration of its nature for deaf people in the Washington, D.C., area.

Gallaudet University also was well-represented. Among the exhibitors were the National Information Center on Deafness, the Gallaudet University Press, the Gallaudet University Alumni Association, the Public Relations Office, and the Office of Admissions.

The array of entertainers included many groups and individuals from the University: the MSSD Theatre Arts Department's Road Show; ASL poetry by Dr. Clayton Valli, assistant professor in ASL, Linguistics, and Interpretation; comedy by Stephen Ryan, sign language trainer in ASL, Linguistics, and Interpretation; ASL storytelling by Janet Weinstock, preschool instruction teacher at KDES, a dog show presented by Marsha Miceli, KDES program supervisor; a duet by Angela McCaskill-Gilchrist, MSSD assistant principal, and her son, Jaron; and clowning by Flo Vold, assistant professor of mathematics, and Sharon Hayes, assistant director of the University Center. In addition, the National Anthem was signed by

KDES students. Jane Norman, assistant professor in the Department of Television, Photography, and Educational Technology, served as mistress of ceremonies.

To help festival-goers get to the site, Gallaudet ran three buses to and from the Foggy Bottom Metro station.

Gallaudet was well-represented among the 12 individuals recognized for their contributions to the deaf community. The honorees were: University President I. King Jordan; Dr. Roslyn Rosen, vice president for Academic Affairs and board member of the World Federation of the Deaf; Dr. Jack Gannon, author and special assistant to the president for advocacy; Art Roehrig, coordinator of low vision and blind services in Disability Services and Programs; Toby Silver, advocate for deaf access to media and coordinator of distance learning for the Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center; Dr. Deborah Sonnenstrahl, Art Department professor and Washington, D.C., Teacher of the Year, 1994; John Yeh, Board of Trustees member and chair of Integrated Microcomputer Systems; and Gil Eastman, professor emeritus and deaf theater pioneer.

Other honorees—all Gallaudet graduates—were Ernest Hairston, chief of the Captioning and Adaptation Branch, Division of Educational Services, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education; Dr. Barbara Kannapell, consultant in deaf culture studies; Dr. Betty Miller, artist; and Gary Viall, president of the Virginia Association of the Deaf.



NTD actor and Gallaudet graduate Frank Dattolo, '93, as dentist "Dr. Paign," is shown with his reluctant patients in a scene from *An Italian Straw Hat*, coming soon to Gallaudet.

NTD to perform 'Italian Straw Hat'

The National Theatre of the Deaf will bring its adaptation of the fast-paced comedy *An Italian Straw Hat* to the Elstad Auditorium stage October 6 and 7 at 8 p.m. Gallaudet University will be NTD's only stop in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area on its 18-state, six-month tour.

An Italian Straw Hat, a classic French farce by Eugene Labiche and Marc Michel, was adapted for NTD by Ken Albers, who also directs the play. The madcap comedy of mistaken identities, impossible situations, and close calls delighted audiences and critics in 50 cities during a national tour of the production last season.

The rave reviews and popular appeal of the production led NTD to extend the show to a second season—the first time in the 28-year history of the renowned deaf acting troupe that a

show has been held over.

An Italian Straw Hat is also one of NTD's most lavish productions. It features an 18-foot Eiffel Tower housing one-man-band Ira Mitchell, who composed and arranged the music he performs for the show.

The production will be presented in NTD's signature style of combining sign language and voice.

General admission tickets for the show are \$12, and \$8 for full-time Gallaudet students with I.D. Reservations can be made by calling x5500 (Voice) or x5502 (TTY). Elstad Auditorium box office hours are: October 2-5, 2-5 p.m.; October 6, 2-8 p.m.; and October 7, 5-8 p.m.

Classified Ads

Classified ads are published in printed and on-line versions of *On the Green* for Gallaudet faculty and staff. Written ads must be submitted in person or by mail to *On the Green*, MSSD, Room G-37. Off-campus phone numbers must include an area code and whether the number is voice or TTY. In compliance with the Education of the Deaf Act of 1992, as amended, payment of \$1 per ad per week must accompany each ad. The deadline for submitting ads is Friday, three days before the on-line version and 10 days before the printed version. Ads received September 25-29 will be posted October 2 and printed October 9.

FOR SALE: Townhouse, new carpet and paint, 3 BR, 2½ BA, 3 levels, L-shaped front porch, deck, fenced yard, end unit, eat-in kitchen, W/D, ceiling fans, landscaped yard, \$118,000/neg. Call Joyce McPherson (301) 336-9189 (V) evs. or e-mail JHMCIPHERSON.

FOR SALE: Microwave w/carousel, 4 yrs. old, 1.5 cu. ft., \$125/BO; 9-lb. Brunswick bowling ball, \$50/BO. Call Patti (202) 927-4872 (TTY) by 4 p.m.

WANTED: Nonsmoking roommate for 3-BR duplex in Odenton, Md., swimming pool and fitness center, avail. Oct., must have own trans., no pets; 5 min. to MARC station, 40 min. drive to D.C.; \$425/mo. and util. or neg. Call Patti (202) 927-4872 before 4 p.m.

FOR RENT: House at 252 14th St. NE, Capitol Hill, 2 BR, 1 BA, CAC, W/D, DW, wood floors, skylights, deck, elec. garage, security, avail. immediately, \$875/mo. plus deposit. Call (703) 299-9885.

FOR RENT: Large room in Laurel, Md., home, master BR w/2 closets, priv. BA, kitchen privileges, W/D, no pets; \$450/mo. for single, \$600/mo. for couple, incl. util. E-mail GAOLIVA.

FOR RENT: Private, furnished 1-BR basement apt. in Bowie, Md., w/kitchen, family room; prefer rent to prof. staff or married couple. Call (301) 464-9581 (TTY) or e-mail JHYNES.

WANTED: Mature, thoughtful female personal attendant for deaf and disabled young woman to assist w/exercise, some cooking and personal care, sign language preferred; hours and salary nego., possible live-in. Call (202) 526-8806 (TTY) or (202) 554-2188 (V).

on the
GREEN

Published biweekly for the staff and faculty of Gallaudet University by the Department of Publications and Production.

Editor

Todd Byrd

Editorial Staff

Lynne McConnell
Andrea Shettle

Photography Staff

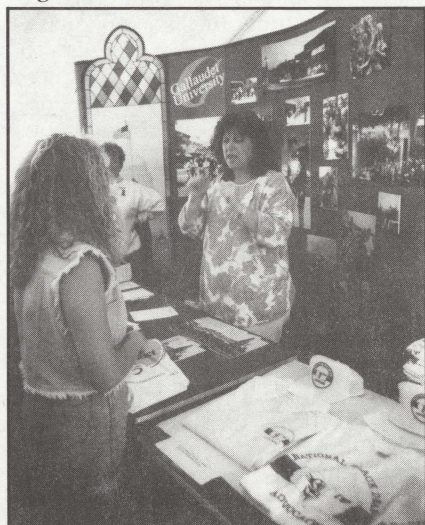
Chun Louie
Joan Schlub

Typesetting

Thomas Corcoran



Gallaudet University is an equal opportunity employer/educational institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, hearing status, disability, covered veteran status, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, source of income, place of business or residence, pregnancy, childbirth, or any other unlawful basis.



Debbie DeStefano, Admissions director, gives information at the Deaf Culture Festival September 16. Beside her is Sherry Dubon, representing the Public Relations Office. The offices were among five from Gallaudet with displays at the festival.